My Mother's Legacy [By Agnes Theresa (Gangle) Rowley]

The Gangles – Matilda to Agnes (and family)

Introduction

My mother Agnes Theresa (Gangle) Rowley wrote the following biography of her grandmother, mother and herself sometime during the last twenty years of the twentieth century. It spans one and one half centuries starting in 1848. She penned it in pencil and it was then entered into computer file by my brother Marvin. Marvin also made a contribution which is shown in italics and I took editorial license with some of the writings and added some historical time traces. With the exception of Marvin's recollections the story has kept my mother as the first person (the story teller).

I have added a section emphasizing my mother's married life to this story which my mother must have felt would detract from the story she was compelled to tell. She obviously had a lot of compassion and respect for her mother and grandmother. She wrote the story as a tribute to her mother, who was a unique person and had remarkable fortitude. Also added are inclusions I researched and took the liberty to include which give historical significance, tying the events to the period and times.

The Rowley family has been written as a separate article which follows the American Rowley's of our family, from the Pilgrim "Planter of Plymouth" Henry Rowley to Agnes's husband Jessie Rowley and their children.

When you read her story you will realize how the world has changed during the last 150 years.

Daniel S Rowley - 1/22/2003

My Grandmother Matilda [Sweden about 1850]

In the first half of the nineteenth century, due in large part to new inventions such as the steam engine, industrial development began throughout much of Europe and America. Some of the first industrial advances where the canals which usually used horse power to pull barges. An important American canal was the Erie canal that connected New York's Hudson river with the Great Lakes. In the first half of the century the Erie canal was a great success in transporting people and freight. Slightly later the steam engine advanced to production of steam locomotives that would power the railroads. By 1850, after the canals, the beginnings of the railroads and early telegraph began to interconnect major developed cities.

The horse was still the prime transportation mover for the common populations and the telephone was still off in the future. Cities and home were still without power as we know it today and late evening reading was done by candle or fueled lamps. Obviously people moved with different time tables, turning back the bed covers at dusk and rising with the sun. Rare indoor plumbing was reserved for the aristocrats and wealthy and bathing was usually a family affair. There were few who had centralize heating in the winter and most people spent their waking hours dressed in highly layered clothing. Winter survival depended on preparations made during the Summer and Fall as they had for centuries before.

In far off Sweden, winters were cold, but the natives knew how to handle the cold long nights. The sleigh replaced the wagon as the principle transporter. By our present standards it was a harsh environment, but to them it was business as usual. Families helped one another, their friends and neighbors.

My Grandmother, Matilda Murts was born near Uppsala, Sweden in 1848. Uppsala is about forty miles north of Stockholm, which often took a couple of days to reach by horse & buggy, or sleigh, an was about as far as some people traveled in their lives.

In the summer it was a normal and an expected activity for the children to herd the animals to pasture during the day. When Matilda grew to a young girl she and other children spent the days with the goats or cattle in the pasture areas. They were never alone. In those days survival in the winter meant the summers were a busy time, so while herding the animals they also knitted clothing for themselves and the family. Everyone knitted when time was available, even the men, so there was no free time. Free time was reserved for the long cold winter nights.

Matilda often dropped stitches while knitting and her mother would scold her for her less than perfect articles. She would hate knitting for the rest of her life. Somehow, as her granddaughter, I developed a liking and talent for knitting, but that was in the next century when knitting become more of a hobby than necessity and we truly had some free time.

When she grew to be a teenager she had the privilege to attend a couple of weddings and parties that were long distances away, probably near Stockholm. She recalls the winter trips when it took two or three days to travel by sleigh. They traveled in groups with other young people, stopping at farms along the way at night. They would eat their meals in the farm homes but had to sleep in the barns. She always added, "The girls slept on one side and the boys on the other". They all knew how to behave themselves, or at least they knew better than to pass any other information down, especially to their children. When they finally arrived at the wedding, they would dance all night.

As was often common in those days, as a young child Matilda was pledged, by her parents to marry her cousin. His name was Charley Shellman, and was the son of her mother's sister. When they approached marrying age Charley was in love with another woman and Matilda was in love with another man. Maybe they could find a life with their first love in spite of the family's early decision, but then Charley found his "True Love" out with another man so he demanded that Matilda go on with the marriage. With Charley's demand, and required family obedience, Matilda had no say, so the marriage between Charley Spellman and Matilda Murts took place. She cried all the way up the aisle.

Going to America

When she was twenty one, in 1869, she and Charley had their first son and named him Charley after his father. Like many Europeans of that time, one of Charley's ambitions was to go to America, so he was saving money for the trip. When Charley Jr. was one year old, they had saved enough money for the trip to America. The made the long overland trip to the departure port and set sail for America in 1870.

Steamships were being developed in that era, however sailing ships were commonplace, especially for those of limited means, like Charley & Matilda. It took months to make the voyage in those days. During the long trip Matilda did not adjust well to sea travel and spent most of these months seasick. To make matters worse, she did not know that she was pregnant when they set sail. During the voyage she lost her second son due to a premature birth and he was buried at sea.

During the eighteen hundreds in the United States, people were moving west. This migration initially had begun due to transportation means brought about by the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes. New industry was forming around cities such as Detroit and Chicago. Telegraph was the mode of communications, however Graham Bell's telephone was just around the corner. By 1870, aided by the new railroads, much of the lumber industry had moved to the virgin forests of Wisconsin & Minnesota. From that region lumber could easily be shipped by boat and barge, or by rail, to the markets in Chicago, New York and other New England States. Logging and sawmills of the time were still horse or water powered, however the steam era was in it full development, including donkey engines, logging railroads and steam powered mills The industry was still very labor intensive and required a lot of men and animals.

In forest rich Sweden many men were employed in that country's timber and lumber manufacturing industry. It was therefor normal for Swedes to migrate to the western Great Lakes area where America's lumber industry was now centered. This was the region of the mythical logger Paul Bunyon and his Blue Ox. So when Charley, little Charlie and Matilda arrive in New York, with the promise of work they set out for the Minnesota timber country on the railroad trains that had become the common mode of transportation to the west.

They arrived in Minnesota in 1871. But the promise of a better life did not materialize for Matilda, as soon Charley divorced her and he took off with Charley Jr. He left her with nothing, forcing her to fend for herself. He hadn't really left her with nothing, as neither knew that she was again pregnant with their third child. She couldn't speak English and she felt alone and disserted. So much for those arranged marriages in Sweden.

My mother Christina [Minnesota – 1871]

Matilda eventually ended up in a Swedish community where she could communicate with other Swedes and on September 26, 1871 gave birth to my mother Christina Shellman.

By this time she had no idea where Charley had gone. Bewildered, broke and with her family thousands of miles away in far off Sweden, Matilda was near mental collapse. Soon after Christina was born Matilda tried to leave her on someone's porch in a basket because she couldn't see how she could give the baby proper care and earn a living. She walked a couple of blocks away when she realized she couldn't leave her baby and quickly ran back to get her.

That winter she found a job as a cook in a logging camp where she could keep Christina with her as she worked. The camp was in northern Minnesota and it was so cold during the winter that if she spilled water on the floor she could skate back and forth around the kitchen area as she performed her duties. Christina was kept in a small box with a pillow underneath her. Matilda would light a candle and place it at the foot of the box which kept Christina entertained. She

would stare at the candle for hours. When Matilda changed Christina, she would turn the pillow over since it would be very wet. When she came to change her again, the pillow would be frozen on the bottom side. Matilda soon decided that she had to get another job where it was warmer. This was no place for a small child.

She then found a job as a maid with a well to do family that had steam heat. The first thing Christina did was catch a cold. Sometime later Matilda found work as a washer women for other people, mostly those of some wealth. One of her customers was a Mrs. Grey and she talked Matilda into letting her take Christina to raise as her own since she could not have children of her own and she could give her a more stable upbringing.

For the next few years Christina now had many things that a wealthy child expected, such as new clothes, fancy hairdos, and many toys. Since she was too young to remember her real mother, she came to know Mrs. Grey as her mother and enjoyed the security and privilege of her class. But that was to change in a way that would mark her for life.

About 1878 Mrs. Grey's husband ran off with another woman, deserting his family. Mrs. Grey had no money of her own and was unable to cope with single parenting. So she gave 7 year old Christina back to Matilda. As you can imagine, Christina was shocked to learn that the washer woman was her real mother.

Matilda had remarried to a Mr. Everson who had three girls, Pauline, Helen, and Jenny from a previous marriage. Problems immediately developed between Everson and Christina. Mr. Everson was jealous of Christina and didn't want her included in his family. Due to the insecurity of the times, Matilda reluctantly took Christina to a Catholic convent in St. Paul, Minnesota that ran a orphanage. Christina went from being privileged, to rejection, then to an orphan of sorts, all at the age of 7.

The convent's life for a young girl, who now was unsure of her life and well being, was very strict. She was having difficulty with the lack of nurturing that most family's instill in their children. She developed a problem with bed wetting until she was in her teens and carried a lot of insecurity burdens.

The sisters of the convent tried to cure all bed wetters by pinning the wet sheet to the their shoulders and making them walk the length of a platform in front of the entire school. Needless to say, mothers bed wetting grew worse. Once, one of the girls in her dorm threw her clothes out the window. No one was allowed down stairs after dark so mother had to sneak out and down the stairs to get her clothes. She cut her foot on some glass in an alley, which she never told anyone. Years later while mopping a floor she felt a sharp pain on the arch of her foot and found a piece of glass had work its way out.

Mr. Everson died about four or five years after mother went to live in the convent. This left Matilda with Everson's three girls. Christina, now about 12 years old remained in the convent.

Matilda had became a friend of a Mr. Johnson, who had some solid means as he owned and operated a farm. Johnson's first wife had died giving birth to their sixth child. He then hired a

woman to care for his children, who became pregnant with Johnson's child and she also died during the birth of his seventh child. Johnson's seventh child was a baby boy he named Carl.

Things began to look up when Matilda eventually married Mr. Johnson and with his seven children along with the three Everson children they had a family of twelve. Matilda never had a son and cared for Carl like he was her own. She was the perfect stepmother.

When Mr. Johnson found out that Matilda had an older daughter in a convent he went to get her to bring her home to her mother. The first thing Christina remembers about coming home to the Johnson farm was seeing pigs in a pen squealing to be fed. She asked, "what are those noisy animals in that pen?" Mr. Johnson answered, "those are pigs; you've never seen one before?" She said, "No, I've never seen a pig, what do you do with them?" He answered, "We eat them." She answered, "I'll never eat one of those dirty animals - I'd rather go hungrily".

At last at about 14 years old Christina had a real family and she eventually learned to eat pork. It was the first time in her life where she had someone, especially a father figure, that wanted her, but there were obviously some fears that would last for a lifetime. This would have been 1885.

Probably because of Matilda's dislike for knitting, Christina became the family seamstress, sewing and knitting new and old cloths. In the summer she ran the sickle and the binder and could handle horses as good as any of the boys. She appreciated her new life much more than her ten adapted siblings.

As Christina grew up on the farm with her half sisters and brothers they had many fun times. They learned to swim in a nearby lake named Beautiful Lake which bordered the farm. The kids would grab the dogs tail as he swam letting him tow them behind and soon they learned to swim on their own. One time Christina and her sisters and brothers were given a job planting corn and were told when they were through they could go swimming. The day was hot and they were tired so they put all the corn left in one hole, covered it and went swimming. Of course, when the corn came up they were found out.

Another time when Mr. Johnson and Matilda left to go to town the children started to make candy. It was bubbling like it was supposed to when for some reason their parents returned because they forgot something. When the kid saw them coming they dumped the hot candy in the chicken feeder outside. The chickens went for the hot stuff and when grandma saw those chickens running around with their mouths wide open, the kids were found out. They got into real trouble because their mother loathed to waste food.

When Christina was about 18 years old she went into town and did housework. It was while working there that the piece of glass worked out of her foot. As the years went by, she learned the dressmaking trade. In those days dressmakers would go live with their employer which was usually a family. Sometimes they would stay for weeks, even months on one job. They received their room and board and a few dollars on the side.

When Christina turned 21 (1892) she met a young man by the name of Frank Swanson and he asked for her hand in marriage. She had great respect and admiration for him but she didn't love him. Urged on by her mother she married him. The marriage worked out well; he was very good

to her and she was very happy. Nine months after they were married their first child, Ethel, was born. Luck turned sour again as about 10 months after Ethel was born Frank died from pneumonia (1894). At his death, a brother of his drove into the yard the next day and took all the wood Frank had cut to sell. He told mother he was taking the wood because Frank owed him money and all the wood in the yard would cover the debt. Mother knew this couldn't be true but did not know what to do about it and never attempted to stop him. Soon after Franks death mother took Ethel and went to live on the farm with her parents.

She worked on the farm and one chore was bringing in the hay. She said big bull snakes often fell out of the haystack as she was loading hay on the wagons. They fell on her head and shoulders and sometimes became entangled around her neck. She was so frightened of snakes she would have nightmares about them. Once she dreamed a snake was after her and she grabbed it around its neck. The more she squeezed, the harder the snake struggled; she awoke to find she had Ethel by the leg squeezing it. this frightened her so much she didn't sleep with Ethel anymore. She thought if she had grabbed Ethel around the neck she could have strangled her in her sleep.

During this period Christina had the measles and lost much of her hearing. This loss of hearing would effect her for the rest of her life. She also got an infection is a cut on her left palm of her hand. Since such things often went untreated in those days, as it healed it pulled her little finger on the down to the palm and froze it there for life. She learned to do everything with that handicapped hand.

Christina then met my Martin Gangle while attending mass at the St. Andrews Catholic church in central Minnesota where she attended. Martin Gangle was born in 1872 in Nimitz, Austria. His parents came to the United States in 1881 when he was nine years old and settled in a German community not far from this church. They fell in love and were married at St. Andrews in January 1900.

Martin worked on his fathers farm but soon after their marriage they bought a piece of his uncle Mick's farm. They soon lost that farm and they moved to Melrose, Minnesota where Martin worked in the railroad roundhouse.

Life turned out not as happy as Christina had planned, mainly because Martin was extremely jealous. He accused Christina of sleeping around with other men. He admitted that he knew better and didn't know what got him to accuse her of adultery. Perhaps it went back to his childhood since he admitted that he was an abused child and he took many beatings because his brothers and sisters would tell lies about him. Once his father knocked him unconscious with a Billy club during a time when his father was a policeman.

Another time Martin's father beat a bull while it was tied to a tree so bad that when it was let loose it dragged its back legs. Martin's mother didn't dare try to stop him. She stood there wringing her hands and repeating "Jesus Christ" in German as a prayer. Martin's father and sister came into the yard once blaming him for something and his dad grabbed him from one side and his sister from the other side and tore his shirt off. Martin fainted and lay on the ground as white as a sheet. This happened after Christian and Martin were married.

Agnes Thersa

Soon after Martin & Christina were married babies began to come. The first child, Tillie was born December 24, 1900. Within 2 years brother George was born however he died at birth. Ten months after George, I (Agnes) was born on July 25, 1903. I was born premature and not expected to make it because I would not nurse for the first week. However, because it was summer and hot I survived. February 7, 1904 brother Martin was born.

Westward Ho!

During the last half of the nineteenth century the railroads expanded to the west coast of the United States. The region around Minnesota was originally known, and sometimes still referred to, as the Northwest, but now there was a new northwest which is still referred to as the Pacific Northwest. Now one could board a train and travel to the Pacific Northwest. It had not been long past when a few hardy soles had made the trip by covered wagon over crude wagon roads. Those wagon trains took nearly six months to reach the Oregon country. Now you could be there in a couple of days.

Sometime just prior to 1905 the Johnson family (grandma Matilda) had joined this movement and was now living in Woodland Washington. The traveled by train over the northern route that connected Minnesota with Seattle Washington.

The steam powered railroads were fairly well developed by this period, however the automobile was still a rich man's toy and between the cities the norm was still wagon roads for horse & buggy or the train. Wilbur and Orville Wright flew the worlds first airplane at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina in December of 1903. Early telephones and electric power to light home existed in some cities but like the automobile they were often not for the common folks. However the country was well into the industrial development. Industry was powered by a mix of beasts of burden and steam power, with a few gasoline powered engines coming into common use.

Cristina & Martin Gangle followed the Johnsons by train in 1905. Even these train trips took a toll on people, especially the routes that traveled trough the northern Dakotas & Montana in the winter. Their train was stalled by snow storms in Montana and by the time they got to Spokane in March, young Martin was very sick. They saw a Doctor in Spokane and since Spokane did not have a hospital, he told them to get him to a hospital as soon as they arrived in Seattle. Young Martin died in Christina's arms as they were entering the depot in Seattle.

They then traveled south on another train to Woodland and settled in next door to her parents. Dad found work in the woods and mother worked in a cannery. Grandmother Matilda took care of Tillie and Agnes while their mother worked. Mother was pregnant with Martina while working in the cannery. Their fourth child Martina was born December 21, 1906.

Soon after Martina was born, following the logging work, our family moved to Camas Washington. Dad worked for a few months and was able to buy a farm not far form Camas near Washougal in 1908. That same year they had their sixth child Genevieve (Jenny). Grandma Matilda came to help deliver Jenny and care for the family for a few days.

For heat Dad split cordwood and piled it up like a wigwam to dry. While clearing land on the farm a clearing fire got away and into the woodpiles then it jumped a road and onto the neighbors. The neighbors joined hands and put out the fire before any house burned, however the old stumps in this logged over area burning for weeks. Then there was the excitement of a bear taking a pig out of our neighbor's pen. The men gathered at our house with their guns to hunt the bear.

That winter there was a silver thaw storm and then the weather turned very cold. This was probably the year when the Columbia River in Vancouver froze over for a short time. Dad let the calves in with the cows and just threw hay to them and could not milk them. We all slept in the living room by the stove to keep warm. Mother gave us old catalogs to cut up to amuse ourselves. She brought her canned fruit into the house and kept it behind the heater. One side stayed frozen while the side toward the stove thawed out. We didn't have milk so mother used the frozen fruit on our oatmeal mush. I learned to like it and still do.

At Christmas time the family went to a Christmas program at the school house. We rode in a horse drawn sled with straw on the floor to keep our feet warm. I believe we had hot bricks wrapped in rags for our feet too.

The logging industry, even to this day, is one where winter is often down or unemployed time. This is due to the wet coastal weather and the hilly terrain that made it next to impossible to move the logs out of the woods. This often meant that workers would move often to follow paying work. Probably due to the long hard winter, Dad lost or sold the farm and again following work we moved about fifty miles up the Columbia river to Dee, Oregon This was about 1909 when I was six years old.

Homes in Dee were tents with wood burning heaters built by the sawmill owner. They had wooden floors and sides which were about 4 feet high. We had two tents facing each other with the fly cover linking them together. One tent was for living and cooking and the other one was for sleeping. They were quite warm but burned lots of wood. Dad built a full sized double decked bed for us kids to sleep in. Mother did not send me to school although I was 6 years old, because she thought it was to far for a 6 year old to walk. My sister, Tillie, did go though. That winter it snowed so deep that when the paths were dug from home to home I couldn't see out over the snow.

It seemed like we were often moving and we moved again early in 1910 to the Alberta District in Portland. We were only there for a few months and then moved to the Lents District where I finished the first grade. We then moved back to about six miles north of Washougal into the Yacolt burn area. It must have been soon after the burn as there was no under brush in the area. The original Yacolt burn was in September 1902.

Dad got a job cutting 4 ft. logs for the Camas paper mill. The year when I was eight, my sister Tillie stayed in Portland and went to school, while I did not go to school. Mother helped me with my reading. When I was nine we moved close enough to the school so I could attend. By this time I was nine. That summer before school started my brother, Lawrence, was born on July 4, 1912. Mother sent my sister Tillie to the neighbor for a woman to help her but Dad helped

deliver Lawrence before the neighbor arrived. Martina, Jenny, and I stayed outside. They sent for a Doctor after he was born; the only time mother had a Doctor at childbirth.

By September we had moved again and Dad bought a farm and house on a hill called the Heater place and we lived there until 1916, which was a long time in one place for us growing children. The house was a two story house. The girls slept upstairs and mother, dad, and baby Lawrence slept down stairs. We had pack rats and sometimes when we woke in the morning there were little piles of sticks and things like string on our beds, I guess we were sound sleepers. This was one of the best times our family ever enjoyed. Mothers last child, Rose Mary (Rosy) was born June 26, 1915, while we lived there.

The logging Company built a new school in this area and we attended it. It was built out of rough 1x12 boards. For black boards they put some kind of rubber material on the wall. When you came to a crack in the wall you couldn't write and had to learn to skip those places.

Mother love to fish as she had done a lot of it in Minnesota. One day when we lived at the Heater place she took me fishing in the Washougal river. We left Tillie at home to bake bread. I don't remember if mom caught anything but I caught my first fish. I yanked him so hard he flew off the hook and into the brush where I promptly got him. I was a fisherwoman from that day on.

Dad had bought a horse, buggy and saddle for $20. We soon found out why it seemed such a good buy, the buggy and saddle were well worth the price, but old Brownie was the balkiest horse I ever knew. When dad hitched up old Brownie he kicked and reared and it looked as if he would kick the front out of the buggy. Dad and mother would work and work with him until he finally decided to go and he went very well until he came to a hill. Then he would go just so far up the hill and then back up, he would not go any further. Once when I was with mother we had my year old brother Lawrence with us and I held him on my lap while mother ran along side of the buggy urging old brownie up the hill. It did not work and Brownie started to back up, then the buggy tipped over and out I came with Lawrence in my arms. Dad came along and took over. We all stayed out and dad whipped Brownie all the way up the hill and got him to the top. I suppose these problems were better than running out of gas.

We found out Brownie didn't mind a saddle, and even acted like he enjoyed it. Many a time my sister Martina and I used to saddle him and take food to our Dad about six miles away. Dad lived at work during the week and came home on week ends, so Mom would send bread, beans and cookies, etc. with us. I remember Dad telling me he had solved the dish washing problem. He just wiped the plate clean with a slice of bread and turned it over on the table and presto it was ready for the next meal. Even at ten years old I had my doubts about his method.

Once my mother decided to go to an old abandoned orchard to get some prunes. She hitched old Brownie to the buggy. I thought she would never get him going but finally after about an hour she made it and we all piled in. We soon arrived at the orchard and mom unhitched Brownie and let him graze while we picked up prunes and had a picnic. When we got ready to go home and had hitched Brownie, he decided he liked the lush pasture and mom had to fight to get him going again. He even threw himself in the harness, and she had to unhitch him and start all over again. At last Brownie gave up and decided to go home.

Because the buggy was so loaded with prunes and five kids plus herself, mom decided she would let my oldest sister Tillie drive and she would walk through the field. We piled in and mom started out. Old Brownie knew as soon as my sister took the reins and away went Brownie with the bit between his teeth. Mom watched helplessly and away he ran and soon he hit a stump. I could see he was going to hit it so I grabbed the side of the buggy, pulled baby brother Lawrence tight and ducked my head over him trying to protect him. Everyone was thrown out into the brush except Lawrence and I ended up under the buggy. Old Brownie was on this back waving all four feet in the air. Soon mother arrived and checked us all and the only injury was Baby Lawrence had bit his tongue. Soon mom had Brownie up and he meekly started home. They all got into the buggy but me; I wouldn't get back in for anything and walked all the way home. I've been a little afraid of horses ever since.

We lost old Brownie one night when I was 12. A man came by with a team and dad let him put them in our barn for the night. Somehow they kicked Brownie and trampled on him. In the morning dad had to shoot him as he was injured so badly. They dragged his body out into the woods for coyote bait. Although I was afraid of him, I loved him too. In the spring us girls went to the place they had dragged him and there in his middle was the most beautiful trillium (well fertilized) that I had ever seen. I picked those flowers from around Brownie's bones and brought them home and pressed them in a book. I shall never forget our adventures with old Brownie.

In 1916 Dad sold the Washougal farm and bought a farm near Hiesson, Washington located north of Vancouver. Dad built a 20' by 20' double decked house on it. We lived there until sometime during World War 1 when we moved to Portland. This happened after dad and mother had a bitter quarrel. Dad was always jealous and would accuse mother of infidelity. I remember when I was older that he used to tell my sister, Tillie, that his brother John was her father, a Thomas Cheater was sister Martina's father. I can't remember who was supposed to be my sister Jennies father. Emil Krone was supposed to be my brother Lawrence's father but I was his . Why he claimed me I will never know. I know in my mind I did not want to claim him as my dad.

In a way, dad was good to us, although he was an abused child. He spanked my sister Tillie once and then cried like a baby. He never laid a hand on another child after that. As for my plucky mother, she told me she could understand violence in anger. Once when dad accused her of sleeping with his brother John and she was on top of a stack of hay, for a moment she felt like running him threw with the pitch fork. It scared her that she could even think like that.

I don't remember my mother ever spanking any of us but she had her ways of getting us to mind. All she had to do was cry, not that she did it intentionally, and I would do anything she asked. She told me I was very dependable. My older sister, Ethel, used to worry her very much. Ethel married when she was 19. I made up my mind when I was quite young that I would not worry her like Ethel did. Mother always treated me as if I had good sense.

At this time Dad left for 15 months and we never knew for sure where he was as he sent no letters or money. Mother took us to live with Grandma Johnson. We all worked picking berries and then prunes. When school started we went home again.

When our money ran out, we charged groceries at the local store. I worked for the store keeper during spring vacation to help pay some of the bill. When we got sick, mother gave us ginger tea,

then put us to bed with hot bricks to make us sweat. It sure broke our fever. For a cough she made a syrup of honey and onions and simmered it at the back of the stove. In the spring she gave us sulfur and molasses to clean our blood.

When summer arrived Dad came home and asked forgiveness. Because the younger one's cried for dad, mother took him back with the understanding that if he ever accused her of infidelity again he was out and that was that. The war was still in full blast so dad took the family to Portland and went to work in the ship yards. The kids worked picking berries and cherries that summer in 1918, and for the first time in my life, I got to keep some of the money. That fall I worked for my sister Ethel who had a daughter, Phyllis, by this time. In November I got the flue and went home and mother came to take care of Ethel and Phyllis. They both had Pneumonia. When Mother returned home, dad accused her of sleeping with her son-in-law. Mother , true to her word, made him leave. This was in November, 1918.

Tillie wrote about this time period. She was relieved not to have to listen to their fussing. It was sad that my parents ever married each other as they were ethnically and emotionally incompatible. I remember that when I was a little girl papa did many things to make life brighter. I enjoyed listening to his stories about the old country. I remember his good humor, how he laughed. over funny situations. I remember he enjoyed simple socializing, such as church and school entertainment. I especially remember how he boosted my morale with praise over my progress in school. He was always gregariously happy when life was flowing smoothly.

But it was a different story when hard times came knocking at the door. Then his good nature flew out the window. Responsibility was not his forte. It was then that mother took up the ball. It was she who always set the good example of being decent citizens and Christians. She had never forgotten the fine lessons along those lines that the sisters of the Good Shepherd had taught her when she was in their orphanage in St. Paul, Minnesota as a child. Mother studied library books whenever she could squeeze in the time and always urged us to get in as much schooling as possible. Mother was a lady in spite of handicaps, poverty, and lack of formal education.

How we got along in the spring of 1919, I don't remember. Maybe dad helped out some. Things seemed to move fast about that time. That summer all my money went to mom and my sister Tillie worked at housework. Somehow we got enough money to make a down payment on a $1,100 house in the Lents District of southeast Portland. It was the nicest home that I remember living in. It had a living room, dining room, kitchen, pantry, and two bedrooms. We paid for it in three years. In the winter mother did washing for several families.

During much of that time there were only three children at home, Jenny, Lawrence and Rosy. My sister Tillie and I worked and roomed elsewhere where we did housework and went to high school. Martina lived with the Flanders family and went to grade school. Lawrence brought in a few dollars each month selling newspapers down at the streetcar tracks.

World War I was history and the country was about to spring into the roaring twenties. Automobiles were now becoming common along with telephones and electrical power, although some of these still were reserved for the privileged. By this time some telephones even had a dial, but most still required and operator to connect you to your neighbors. Portland now had street lights, albeit some were gas powered and silent movie theaters existed. Edison's

phonographs were in a lot of homes and Radio was opening up home entertainment and public communication. Roads, such as the now historic Columbia River Highway, were built or being built and rapidly connecting cities by automobile. Bridges, such as the Interstate bridge between Vancouver and Portland, were replacing the ferries of the past and Ford was changing the landscape with the affordable Model T's. And the airplane was no longer a mystic concept as airports in existed at Vancouver, Washington and later in the twenties, Portland would have its own airport on Swan Island.

When I was 16, dad sued for divorce. He said all mother was interested in was his money, now I ask you; "what money?". Mother did not contest it. Dad signed over four lots they owned in Portland and the forty acre farm in Washington to mother to be used to raise use us kids. Then dad left for parts unknown. When mother tried to sell the properties the papers dad signed to mom could not be found as the lawyer had lost them and dad couldn't be found either so they did no good. Mother let the farm go for taxes but kept the lots and paid taxes on them for years and years. I don't remember what mother worked at during those years.

Our house in Lents was located two houses East of The Rowley family house. The next year when I was seventeen I met the man I married. The next year Jesse Alvin Rowley and I were married on September 26, 1921. We lived with my mother-in-law for a couple of months until Grandma Johnson moved out of mothers house. Then we moved into my mothers house and I took care of Jenny, Lawrence, and Rosy while mother worked. We bought the food for the family as our rent. After we lived with mother for about a year, mother offered to sell the house to us for $1,000 and like two fool kids we turned it down.

Just before I married, mom had her teeth pulled (what there was left of them) and bought a new set of store bought ones. Near the end of 1922 mother traded the Lents house for a place in Wren, Oregon about 10 miles west of Corvallis. We found out later that her new house was hardly worth $400 dollars. It did have a few acres and was right across from the LaBare ranch. My brother, Lawrence, tells that mother hired a man to haul her furniture to Wren for $20. It got so late that they stayed in the hotel in Corvallis that night. When mother bought their breakfast the next morning Lawrence remembers her putting three teaspoons of sugar on his cereal. That was something she never did at home. Lawrence was ten years old at the time.

They arrived at their small farm with $1 but mother soon had a job cooking at a logging camp on Alexander road about three miles north of their home. The pay was $75 per month. The logging was done with horses and the camp was close to the Alexander school. Lawrence says he and Rose went to five different schools that year. He went to Lucia school in Washington, St. Ignatius catholic school in Portland, Lents school, then the Alexander school, and lastly the to Wren school.

When mother worked at the logging camp she complained to the owner about the flour he bought for baking bread. It was the sweeping from the flour mill. He said that was what his family used.

Mother had a boy friend that worked in the logging camp who asked her to marry him but mother was not interested. They lived in the Wren home until January 1928. Mother sold the place to the LaBares and moved to a place in a community called Norwood, which is south of Tualatin, where she lived for 16 years. In spite of the ensuing Great Depression of the thirties,

things got easier for mother from this time on. Lawrence was 14 and he worked during the summers and at other times to help his mother. Lawrence graduated from Tualatin High school about 1931 and went into the depression era CCC program where he worked on forest service projects in the Detroit area on the North Santiam river. He sent some of his earnings home to his mother.

- Norwood

Part of the following story is told by Agnes's oldest son Marvin Rowley. These remembrances from Marvin are set out in italics and are presented with Marvin as 'first person'. Marvin somewhat followed his uncle Lawrence and graduated from Oregon State in Forest Engineering in the late forties. I have also added some information that has been supplied from Roberta, Marie and other family members which has been merged into mothers original writings.

Jessie and I joined mother moving to Norwood in September of 1929 and bought a six acre place about a thousand feet east of grandmother's place. Our place was on a different road from the road to her house. At the community center of Norwood there was a community hall at a tee in the road; our road was to the right and her road was to the left. It was about a mile if you drove around the loop to her house, but only a short walk across a creek and then across one neighbors property to grandma's house. We built a bridge across the creek and had easy access at the fence lines. There was a small store near the hall, that was operated by the Pilgers, that stocked some of the essentials like flour and sugar and of course a few candy bars for the kids

Our property had no house so it took some time to move from Lents. Jessie first put up a tent with a wood plank floor and other living essentials. He then started to build a one room house that later became the living room of the final home a few years later, some additions were after WW II. Of course by this time we owned an automobile so he also built a small log cabin that was the garage and on the side of the garage was a 'lean to' that was our wood shed. Jessie worked about twenty miles north in Portland, so during the first few months we lived in the tent which had a wood stove for heat and cooking. Jessie worked on the house evenings and week ends.

These properties were on land that had been logged, but a lot of the smaller trees were left behind along with hundreds of stumps left from the logging. We had to clear the remnant stumps from much of the land and Jessie became experienced in blowing out stumps with dynamite. Eventually Jessie also built a barn and we had a cow, a hay field and a great garden. The Norwood neighbors pulled together to help one another during the depression. Dad had a job, even though it was often part time, but as a printer he still made enough money to work on the house and also to help others, who in turn helped him by supplying material on the barter system. Grandmother relied on us for most of her transportation during the 1930's. Because she lived so close, our children were almost daily visitors to her home and her to ours.

Rosy was the last to leave grandmother's home . She graduated from Tualatin High about 1933 and lived at home until she married Walter Bischof in November of 1934. From 1934 to about 1938 mother lived alone for the first time in her life. One day mother set a trap in her root cellar because something was getting into her vegetables. When she went to check it she had caught a

skunk and got sprayed good. She finished him off and then as a joke she came over our house in her smelly clothes. Did we run to the far side of the room. The smell was awful.

[Marvin] *At grandmas home, I remember when she was cooking or canning and needed a fire for a long period of time she would bring in long limbs from the forest near the house. She would put a box out in front of her wood cook stove and rest one end of the limbs on it and the other end would be in the firebox. She would sit beside these limbs knitting or doing other work and push the limbs into the stove as the ends burned off.*

She was always doing something. She dried apples and pears and kept them in the attic. When we showed up we always begged for a handful and she always gave us some. Besides knitting she made braided rugs and hooked rugs that were made of short pieces of cloth threaded through a burlap sack frame and tied. She created her own designs. Once a swarm of honey bees settled on the corner of her house. Lawrence found a empty bee hive and somehow got the queen bee in the hive and rest followed. She had honey after that.

[Agnes] About 1935 or 1936 dad came up from Stockton, California to visit and try to convince mother to remarry him but she would have none of it. At this time she received a monthly pension of $15 that she used it to buy clothes and even saved a little.

After graduating from High School Lawrence went to Corvallis and to attend Oregon State College. While at Oregon State, Lawrence had met a girl named Alice and they were married in Corvallis in February of 1938. In 1939 he graduated from Oregon State with a degree in Forestry and they moved into mother's house in Norwood. Mother then went to live with Rosy and Walt who lived on the Bischof farm near Wilsonville. From Rosy's home, she went to live with Martina in Portland for a time, then a while with Tillie who lived with her husband Albert in Washougal. She eventually returned to Rosy's about 1940. That year they found she had cancer and had a hysterectomy that removed all the cancer. She was free from cancer the rest of her life.

[Marvin] *Pamelia Lake is a beautiful mountain lake at the foot of Mount Jefferson. To get to it you must hike a few miles on a mountain trail. During the 1930's I was a frequent visitor with Grandma to Pamelia Lake. Lawrence manned the USFS guard station during the summer months while attending Oregon State. During the summer of 1937 my folks took us to Pamelia lake for a 2 week stay. During that time grandma was there and cooked for us. I thought she was the best cook in the world. She could make a meal over a camp fire that made us hunger just smelling it.*

I think it was the summer of 1938 that I stayed a Pamelia Lake for a week. During that week Grandma, cousin David Gangle and I made two trips. First we hiked six miles to Jefferson Park and stayed over night. It was very cold at night and in those days we didn't have sleeping bags. We combined all our bedding into one bed; David slept on one side and I slept on the other side with all our clothes on just to keep warm. Grandma would have been 67 years old and kept up with us kids with no problem.

Another hike we took was up to the Grizzly peak lookout; about 3 miles and 2500 feet higher than Pamelia lake. A lookout is an windowed enclosed structure on a platform and on top of a mountain with crude living quarters. They are observation points for USFS fire watches during

the fire season. From the lookout we went down the south side of Grizzly to a small lake on Grizzly flat to pick Huckleberries. It was a sunshiny day, however in the afternoon clouds moved in and as we climbed back up to the lookout it began to rain and it was cold. We reached the lookout, changed into dry cloths and built a fire to warm up. Grandma put a kettle full of fresh huckleberries on the stove and made huckleberry dumplings. Again, it tasted like the best food in the land and it is what I compare huckleberries to this day and why I like to go find them.

[Agnes] Walt and Rosy had bought a 40 acre farm on the Meridian Road about one mile east of our Norwood home. The well marked Wilsonville Bischof farm still exists along the Wilsonville to Sherwood road and is ran by descendents of Walt's brothers who operated the farm after Walt bought the new place. Mother was there to help Rosy when her two children were born.

The Norwood farm house was an old house that had a large room on the second floor that was mother's room. Mother's room had a brick chimney running from the first floor and along the wall in her room. One day she went up to her room. When she opened the door which opened inward, the room was aflame. She pulled the door shut, staggered to a window to recover her breath, then went down stairs and told the family. The house was a total loss and mother loss all her pictures and worldly good. She burnt her lungs some and never regained the strength she had up to that time. She was now 78 years old and the year was 1948.

By this period Lawrence had a job with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at Coos Bay, Oregon and had moved his family to a large house there. Mother also followed and moved to a trailer behind Lawrence's place. Lawrence had lived in her Norwood house for a t time and when he moved she sold her house in Norwood.

In her 79th year Dad showed up and wanted her to marry him again. This time she decided she would marry the persistent old man again so went to California to live until their marriage. She then got sick and the marriage never took place.

Lawrence went to Oakland California to visit her and when he saw how sick she was he brought her home. She spent some time in a Catholic rest home in North Bend. In two months she ended up in the hospital with a pain in her back. I went to Coos Bay and got her from the hospital and flew home with her. It was the only time mother ever flew. It was the time of a big forest fire near Coos Bay and we flew over the fire. When we got home mother stayed with me for about two months, then she went to live with Martina.

In October after her 80th birthday she had a massive stroke. When she got out of the hospital her mind was gone and she was paralyzed and bedridden. Lawrence then took her to the Catholic hospital in North Bend . She died there on December 9, 1951. The funeral was at the Catholic church in Wilsonville and she was laid to rest in the Hood View cemetery about half way between Wilsonville and Sherwood.

Additional comments by Dan Rowley

Mother's (Agnes) story ends with her mother's demise. I have compiled another story again with the help of Marvin and Roberta called "The Rowley Chronicles" that includes the life of Jesse

and Agnes, and their children, through mother's death in 1995. The Rowley Chronicles carry back to the Pilgrim Henry Rowley in 1632 Plymouth.

File: MyMothersLegacy